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ABSTRACT

It has been estimated that about 10 percent of the total United States population, some 23 million American adults, are functionally illiterate. About 100,000 of these persons live in the Milwaukee area and could be assisted by extension programs such as those conducted by Milwaukee Area Technical College. One of the major reasons for the college's relative success in delivering basic skills education has been its willingness to collaborate with so many different local community agencies. Other factors important in conducting a successful adult basic education program are the following: (1) establishing the program in the local community; (2) using existing local government bodies as sponsors--such an approach is exemplified by the Milwaukee Public Schools; (3) scheduling programs to meet the time constraints of disadvantaged persons, essentially adopting a flexible approach with multiple entries and exits; (4) creating a curriculum based on the survival skills needed by disadvantaged urban residents; (5) selecting empathetic, preferably local, neighborhood personnel for conducting the classes; (6) implementing successful recruitment efforts, such as using influential people in the neighborhoods; (7) organizing the learning environment in ways that do not intimidate or raise hostility in the clients; (8) being cognizant of the characteristics of the adult disadvantaged student; (9) recognizing the differences between adults' and children's learning styles and needs; (10) gearing instruction to individual differences; (11) recognizing and working with cultural differences; and (12) developing a sense of community among students and teachers. Although incorporating these factors into adult literacy programs should contribute to their success, such programs are having to compete increasingly for their share of limited budgets with high technology education and programs for more able students. (KC)

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THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN URBAN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

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and

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Presented to:

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THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN URBAN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

In April of this year, the National Commission on Excellence in Education presented its findings. Their conclusions about literacy were not surprising to adult educators involved in literacy education. The National Commission verified that some 23 million American adults--about 10% of the total U.S. population--perform so poorly on the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing and comprehension that they are considered functionally illiterate.[1]

This paper describes the program response of an urban technical college to the problem of under-education so adequately documented in the National Commission's recent report.

EXTENT OF LITERACY

Statistics released recently by the Wisconsin Board for Vocational, Technical and Adult Education document just how serious the problem of under-education and illiteracy is in the geographical area served by the college. These figures (which are based on census data) indicate that 20,943 adults have completed four or less years of schooling. Another 140,986 adults have completed only five to eight years of schooling. More comprehensive statistics are displayed in Table 1 below.

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[1]The National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. A report to the Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education, U. S. Government Printing Office (Washington, D.C., 1983), p. 8.

TABLE 1[2]

(Sampling Process Based on Census Data)

Educational Attainment by Grade Level Completed,
Male, Female and Total for all of the Country's Adults,
25 Years of Age and Over

Highest Educational Level Completed	Males	Females	Total
0-4	10,267	10,676	20,943
5-8	64,990	75,996	140,986
9-11	54,363	57,117	111,480
TOTAL - - - - - - -	129,620	143,789	273,409

Other studies on the extent of illiteracy in Milwaukee confirm the seriousness of the problem. A recent study by Murphy and Pawasarat, researchers at the University of Wisconsin Extension's Employment and Training Institute, reported that the number of illiterate individuals in greater Milwaukee is approximately 100,000 persons.[3] Dr. Vivian Harding, Director of the Lauback Literacy Center in Milwaukee, recently estimated that there are presently 100,000 to 125,000 adult non-readers in the four county Milwaukee Metropolitan area. It should be recognized that these figures do not identify those 18 to 24 year olds who have dropped out of school or those who have completed school without adequately learning to read. These additional persons are part of the client group needing basic skills education.

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[2]Les Gierach, "Illiteracy in Milwaukee County," Paper included in Final Report of Goals for Greater Milwaukee 2000, Inc. (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1983).

[3]Bruce Murphy and John Pawasarat, "Tnh Pxomlfga Esgti," Milwaukee, Volume 5, No. 1, September, 1980.

In Milwaukee, the Employment Subcommittee of the United Way Justice and Employment Needs Panel, a committee composed of prominent business, labor and other community representatives, voiced its concern about the impact of illiteracy on the local economy. On November 27, 1979 the Subcommittee made its final determination of the most important employment related problems in the metropolitan area. The Subcommittee stated that:

> "Many job seekers, including increasing numbers of high school graduates, lack the basic reading and math skills necessary to enter the competitive job market; and there are few mechanisims in the school system that prevent students from getting to the point of being irretrievably uneducated and unemployable."[4]

One result of large numbers of persons remaining illiterate is that many of these individuals are thus unemployable or underemployed. This greater unemployment means that increased public tax money must be allocated for public welfare. A University of Wisconsin Extension study, carried out by their Employment and Training Institute, found that 55% of the welfare recipients in Milwaukee County's 13.6 million dollar Work Assistance Program were high school drop-outs.[5]

Illiteracy and unemployment have also been shown to be highly related to criminal activity. A Florida study of drop-outs estimated the national cost of crime due to inadequate education at

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[4] Ibid., p. 43.

[5] Ibid., p. 43.

10.4 billion dollars.[6] This same study noted that 96% of newly committed Florida prison inmates had not finished high school. The problem in Florida is indicative of conditions occurring throughout the United States.

The extent of illiteracy in Milwaukee is sufficiently serious to warrant concentrated efforts of long range planning and collaborative goal setting by the wide array of smaller educational and social agencies that exist in the City. These numerous agencies should develop improved mechanisms that would enable interagency cooperation. Sharing of staff, joint conference planning and shared use of existing facilities would be good examples of such a relationship.

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Historically, the Milwaukee Area Technical College has always provided basic skills courses as part of its urban mission. The Institution has experimented with a variety of delivery systems, and urban extension represents one of them. Outreach represents an adaptation to a changing urban environment as well as a shift in philosophy in which urban institutions have made a serious attempt to structure an organic and more meaningful relationship with their host communities.

The Milwaukee Area Technical College has a continuing commitment to basic skills instruction as evidenced by the fact that the

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[6]Dean L. Webb, "Savings to Society by Investing in Adult Education," Proceedings of the Conference on Economics and Social Perspectives Adult Illiteracy, Tallahasse, Florida, Department of Education (1977).

College's governing board has made basic skills one of its priorities in its strategic planning policies. Similarly, this committment is represented within the budget. Despite revenue shortfalls, there has been no reduction in funding levels during the last three fiscal years.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

One of the major reasons for the college's relative success in delivering basic skills education has been its willingness to collaborate with so many different local community agencies. In order to reach greater numbers of citizens they have found it increasingly necessary to cooperate with churches and the local public schools, a housing project, a community action center, a rehabilitation center, a senior citizen center and the Milwaukee House of Correction. Basic skills education is now provided at numerous such locations in neighborhoods throughout the urban community. This expansion of education services through cooperation with community agencies has resulted in the recruitment of large numbers of basic skill deficient students who probably would not otherwise be served. This expansion of the program through community agencies is also in direct accord with the amendments to the Adult Education Act passed by Congress in 1979. That law required the significant expansion of adult education services specifically "through the use of agencies, institutions and organizations other than public schools." In order to carry out this provision of the federal guidelines, it became necessary to

cooperate with numerous community agencies. Our experience at this college has shown that neighborhood agencies were often capable of serving local residents just as effectively as our urban and suburban campuses with 42,000 full and part time students.

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

1. Locating the Program: Problems of Intervention

There are several difficulties attendant upon extending educational services into the urban community. The most obvious is the resistance of institutional providers, and most importantly for our discussion, the images of deviance which colour our perception of the city.

Any successful collaboration with urban community groups must proceed from the recognition that the city does not represent a single cultural or social system. That the city, in reality, is a richly textured mosaic of cultural styles and social groupings. Program design and implementation should avoid a singular approach and should be structured on the basis of an understanding of the life ways of the residents of each area. Such an understanding is critical to any efficient delivery of services since a "deficit" perspective in which student populations are defined in terms of incompetence, inability and illiteracy continue to dominate the approaches of adult educators in their treatment of urban areas. These areas are portrayed as disorganized, fragmented and full of strain; as theatres of serious conflict, peopled by disesteemed types who display varieties of behavior at variance with those of

conventional or middle class society. Such a picture emerges when lower class groups are viewed through the cultural prism of middle class researchers and professionals. The literature on lower socio-economic areas appears to certify these prevailing prejudices.

For adult education (program) purposes, the central city should be viewed within its own frame as a very tightly organized geographical unit, and although the organizational units within the area may differ in structure and function from other units in the larger society, the organizational norms of these operating units are significant for persons domiciled within these areas. In this sense, a local community is not just a censual division but a functioning social system with a variety of social controls significant for the individuals in that society, even though these normative prescriptions may eventuate in behavior that has little congruence with other traditional value systems. What this suggests to us in adult education, in terms of a strategy of intervention, that rather than trying to impose new normative and organizational structures on these disadvantaged urban neighborhoods, that the educational institution seek to integrate its functions within the institutional matrix of the target community. In designing educational programs, educational institutions should make a serious attempt to utilize the imagination, resources, initiatives and capabilities of members of the host or target community.

Given separate traditions, such an integration might appear difficult at first glance; however, a variety of agency structures are present in these urban neighborhoods. Community schools, churches, neighborhood houses and community action centers are

good examples of these. These community centers have citizens advisory boards with broad community-based representation. In terms of the total needs of the community, an adult education service is a natural addition to these multi-service agencies. Furthermore, when educational services are located within existing neighborhood multi-service centers, students become privy to a range of supportive services such as health care, legal aid, consumer education, financial counseling, family planning, child care and transportation assistance. This approach also takes cognizance of the fact that disadvantaged persons are plagued by a bewildering variety of problems which must be treated before their personal resources can be diverted to address educational issues.

GOVERNANCE: MODELS FOR SPONSORSHIP

The utilization of existing local governmental bodies is strategic for several reasons. Since all forms of help involve dependency and control, this design admits the possibility of shared administrative control. Furthermore, the involvement of community residents in educational policy enhances the possibility that educational objectives will be functionally related to the needs and aspirations of the client community. We envision a process in which community persons and groups define their problems for themselves, identify appropriate responses to them and directly participate in the process.[7] A variety of mechanisms such as

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[7] Thomas R. Dewan, "The Professionalization of the Client," Social Policy, January/February, 1978, Volume 8, No. 4.

joint sponsorship, written agreements, contractual arrangements, membership on governing bodies and citizens advisory boards can foster the community-institution linkage. Finally, a demonstrated involvement of residents, in the processes and organizational structures impinging on their neightborhoods, will aid in the reduction of the alienation and suspicion which suffuses urban disadvantaged subcultures.

Such an approach is also exemplified by the Milwaukee Public Schools. Cooperation with a variety of community agencies has helped the Milwaukee Public Schools to become a well known model of how a public school system can more effectively relate to its host community. The Milwaukee Public Schools enjoy a fine national reputation as being an extremely successful urban system. One of the unique services of our school system is municipal recreation and community education. This division has been providing service since 1911, and through it, Milwaukee has long been known as the City of the Lighted Schoolhouse.

Throughout the years, the Milwaukee Division of Municipal Recreation and Community Education has cooperated with governmental and private agencies, business and industry to meet community needs. The results of these cooperative efforts are programs and services that would be impossible to provide without the sharing of planning, facilities and resources. Examples: The Division works closely with the City Common Council for capital improvements and long range planning, with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for operation of a working farm, nature center

and instructional skating program, with the Milwaukee County Park Commission in program and facility coordination, with University Extension for program and planning, with UW--Milwaukee in special events and programs, with Rexnord Corporation, with the instructional skating programs, with the Milwaukee Foundation for funding of special programs, with the Milwaukee Public Schools Division of Exceptional Education for funding of municipal athletic programs, with Eaton Corporation for community programs, with the Greater Milwaukee Public Park and Recreation Association for interagency program coordination, with the Therapeutic Recreation Association of Milwaukee County for interagency program coordination, with the Social Development Commission for program planning and funding and with the City Development Agency for funding of programs and facilities and with the Milwaukee Area Technical College for the training of its recreational workers. In addition, several basic skills programs were housed in the public schools. Many other cooperative efforts are ongoing with community and neighborhood agencies throughout the City. In 1979 to 1980, 200 cooperative ventures were initiated to meet community needs.[8]

SCHEDULING

If basic skills programs are to be successful, the educational institution must adopt a flexible approach in the scheduling of students. The traditional time-based school units of quarters and semesters has little relevance to the time frame within which the adult basic skills student is operating. In a given

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[8]Les Gierach; George Kliminski; Eric C. Smith, Community Education Models in Wisconsin, Bulletin No. 2134, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1981.

program year, students should be permitted to structure their own time units and to proceed at their own optimum learning pace. This approach can be facilitated through an open-ended program which allows for multiple entries and exits.

Similarly, the class day should be loosely structured. Late night and weekend classes should be viewed as normal. Students should be allowed to adopt a flexible pattern of attendance. This scheduling pattern is premised on the assumption that low income residents have variable time schedules depending upon their familial and occupational demands. The formal learning experience, to be successful, must recognize and accommodate to other pressing demands upon their time. If one takes into consideration the irregular work schedules to which the disadvantaged are privy, such as part time and seasonal employment, shift work and the vagaries of day work, it is readily apparent why the flexible scheduling pattern integrates best with the life style of the adult learner in low income areas.

CURRICULUM

The involvement of the urban disadvantaged with survival problems suggests that "survival" should be the operative word in curriculum design. These individuals have long been forced to rely on their imaginations (and desperation), on "get-by" life-styles[9] or on social resource networks to survive.[10] Given their

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[9] Thomas R. Dewan, Op. Cit., p. 7.

[10] Arlene Fingeret, "Social Network: A New Perspective on Independence and Illiterate Adults," Adult Education Quarterly, Volume 33, No. 3, Spring, 1983.

desparately thin economic margins, behavior occurs without the luxury of a sense of choice and out of clear economic necessity. The rapid advance in technology has rendered a significant segment of this population, in the words of one author, "economically useless."[11] It is estimated that the shift to a high technology dominated economy will leave approximately 3-4 million workers unemployable. Furthermore, the behavior patterns which are adaptive in the slum environment are increasingly maladaptive in the larger conventional society.

The curriculum, therefore, should emphasize individual and group competence through the development of skills which are generalizable to a wide range of tasks. Stress should be placed on those skills which will better enable the individual to cope with his environment such as knowledge of community resources, legal procedures and consumer education. Skills training in this area, however, should not simply allow the individual to accommodate to the pathological features of the central city environment. Rather, the acquisition of these skills should enable the individual to change those features of the environment which militate against the development of his human potential.

The teacher should attempt to use the world of the learner as a source of vocabulary and generative themes. The problems and concerns which the adult student brings to the classroom provide a

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[11] Sidney M. Willhelm, "Who Needs the Negro," Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1971.

basis for the structure of instructional content. The set of exercises which are designed to teach the basic academic skills such as reading, English and math should be structured around recognizable inner and personal needs of the students so that they enhance the survival potential of the student. At the same time, the curriculum should be geared to offer the widest possible option to enrollees. This means that an affiliative relationship should exist between the basic education curriculum and those in other advanced programs within the institution. This is in keeping with the vision of an educational career line in which the basic education program provides an entering wedge to other academic, vocational and technical areas.[12] Relating content to the needs and concerns of the students yields a student-centered and problem-centered curriculum which integrates well with the attitudes and world view of the adult disadvantaged. Such an approach also creates a community of shared interests which facilitates the development of personal and social efficacy.

This type of transformation is alluded to in the writings of Paolo Friere. He feels that to be authentically human means to invest the world with one's sense of meaning and to transform the world through action.

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[12]Frank Samuels, "ABE Urban Extension: Towards a Strategy of Intervention," Adult Leadership, Vol. 24, No. 2, October, 1975, p. 69.

Perhaps the most neglected area of education for the disadvantaged adult is that of civic education. The approaches of adult educators are rooted in imageries from the literature on the so called "culture of poverty" in which conditions of dependency and alienation are seen as central to the plight of the disadvantaged. Professionals routinely redefine collective and political problems such as injustice, miseducation or inequality into individual and technical ones. This is also partly due to the emergence of the ideology of individual responsibility. Therefore, training for self-help is usually conceived in individualistic rather than collective terms. Such efforts, when they occur, are toward the acquisition of employable skills which will increase income and facilitate better consumership. Such approaches eventuate primarily in the maximization of poverty. From such efforts, the disadvantaged do not learn to see their common condition in collective terms. They do not learn to formulate their disadvantagement into just grievances against prevailing values and institutional arrangements and to petition effectively for the redress of those grievances.

In response to this concern, the curriculum should provide the learner with an understanding of the forces that shape his world: (1) the internal dynamics of the central city; (2) institutional arrangements; (the axis of power); (4) the power relationships which exist between the ghetto and the extra-ghetto

territories; and (5) the possibilities of change and their associated cost. The effect of this curriculum dimension would be twofold, one psychological, the other socio-polotical and should eventuate in a more developed sense of efficacy, in which the student realizes that he has the capabilities of changing his lifestyle and class position and that he can exercise a measure of control over the forces that shape his future.

I believe that efforts to enhance the quality of life and to stop and reverse the deterioration of these neighborhoods depends upon the control of economic resources and the transfer of political authority. The primary purpose of the educational process is to change the conditions of living and to strengthen the students' capacity to take control of their own lives; that is, to make education and consciousness raising one and the same process.

SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

The selection of qualified personnel is the fulcrum around which the success or failure of an outreach program revolves. Where integration with a community agency is sought, the basic skills personnel must be able to enter into and relate harmoniously to the existing personnel structure of the host agency. In order to have the least disruptive effect on ongoing agency relationships, it is imperative that the basic skills personnel be conversant with the lifestyles, sensibilities and operating assumptions of the neighborhood residents.

The personnel structure should be essentially an educational team comprised of teacher, teacher-aide, recruiter and counselor.

Program size would determine whether or not the full complement of positions are realized; nevertheless, basic program functions are attributed to each position and should be provided for within the ambit of the total program.

In filling these various positions, priority should be given to qualified neighborhood residents. The use of indigenous persons reduces appreciably some of the problems attendant on remedial interventions of any kind. This is especially true in the case of recruiters, where an in depth knowledge of the neighborhoood and its residents is critical for the successful implementation of recruitment strategies. Where outsiders are selected, the important thing is for them to be able to perceive the demands of another social system, often antithetical to their own and for them to attempt to structure an empathic relationship with the students so that they are better able to discern the values by which the students live and fully appreciate the effectiveness of those values in the lives of those who regard them as real.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment represents a critical priority in any basic skills program. The success of any basic skills program rests ultimately on the institution's ability to recruit students and to retain them for a sufficient period so that the proper educational treatment can be administered. However, despite the felt need for more aggressive and functional recruitment programs, this area of basic skills programming remains substantially underdeveloped.

This state of affairs flows from two false assumptions held by many basic skills professionals; namely, that the onus is on the student to secure information about basic skills programs and that basic education represents a priority for the potential basic skills client population. The widespread failure of adult basic skills programs, because of the lack of student participation, has forced an urgent reconsideration of those assumptions. As a corrective, the twin areas of recruitment and retention should have status parity with curriculum development and counseling. At the same time, the institution must recognize the responsibility for disseminating information about its services for those outside the pale of the traditional media. Therefore, in a community context, the relevant media will involve modifications of traditional information conduits. This means that important institutions and significant opinion leaders as well as the locales, settings and other meeting points in the resident's daily round will have to be charted and appropriate informational strategies designed. Appropriate steps should also be taken to establish indigenous persons in the host institution so that the institution's image becomes more credible in the client community.

ORGANIZING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

It is axiomatic in adult education that attention must be given to the quality of the learning environment. Usually, this refers to both the physical and human dimensions of the environment. Failure to attend to the demands of this critical area can

have a crippling effect on the most carefully designed instructional approach and reduce appreciably the positive outcomes of the educational process.

Unfortunately, the social-psychological organization of the learning environment has not been addressed with the same precision. This failure can be traced to the preoccupation of adult educators with the distinguishing features of the adult disadvantaged, rather than the manner in which these features become relevant in some defined educational context and the implication of these for instruction and classroom management.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ADULT DISADVANTAGED STUDENT

The disadvantaged student, regardless of his previous school experience, remains a stranger to the academic environment. A large segment of this population is unprepared in terms of attitudes, motivation or rudimentary academic skills. Some are new immigrants. Others are second and third generation, but their behavior and linguistic styles are still rooted in their ethnic neighborhoods, leaving unresolved the incongruity between the home and school environments. Some students are making the acquaintance of the school for the first time while others come burdened by 12 years of unsatisfactory academic experiences. Each student represents a unique complex of experiences, competencies, attitudes and motivations. However, what these adult students may have in common is a new-found faith in the efficacy of education and the possibility that it may transform the condition of their lives.

Educational disadvantagement is clearly allied to economic disadvantagement. Because of a paucity of economic resources, the student often comes to the classroom plagued by a multiplicity of stresses. In addition to this, a sense of powerlessness is engendered in the individual because of his inability to engage in the proper management of his environment. This powerlessness translates into a failure orientation which restricts individual initiative and further reduces motivation.

Although the anxieties produced by poverty are difficult to negotiate in a formal learning environment, these stresses must be adequately alleviated before the student can properly attend to the details of the educational process. Each stress condition, depending on its saliency, becomes a reason for the student not to attend class and creates problems of attrition which are independent of teaching strategies or the interactive processes within the classroom. In this context, the teacher should have a knowledge of the institution's resources, which could responsibly address these problems. In addition, the teacher should also attempt to construct personal inter-agency linkages which would facilitate easy referrals and bring community resources to bear on the myriad problems which afflict the disadvantaged. The execution of this function might appear to be outside the normal role requirements of the teacher and many teachers do believe that it is beyond the scope of their responsibility to concern themselves with the socio-emotional welfare of students, but professional discipline involves behavior differentiation; and in helping students to cope with deprivations

which effect their conditions and opportunities, the teacher enhances the probability of the students surviving the institution. Some teachers defend against the occupational risk of an advocacy position by hiding behind a professional bureaucrat's personna, but the successful teacher cannot focus on a narrow formalism and remain indifferent to the plight of his students. Provisions should be made for the students to test their own resources, while the teacher remains available for constructive help. The teacher should not deprive the students of the opportunity and responsibility to solve problems which are the natural outcomes of their own behavior and aspirations. Students should be aided in developing a creative engagement with the possibilities within their situation.

ADULTS AND CHILDREN: THE CRITICAL DIFFERENCES

Since adults differ significantly from children in terms of self-concept, learning motivation, time perspective and the volume and richness of life experiences, it is commonplace in adult education that the approach to children should be differentiated from the approach to adults. However, this ideal is not always realized in the educational treatment of the adult disadvantaged. This is partly due to the fact that the levels of instruction in the disadvantaged classroom argues similarity with that of the public school; nevertheless, these learning milieus are fundamentally different realities which allow sharp distirctions to be made in terms of governance, normative expectations and teaching styles.

In public educational settings, the good students are those who affirm the moral order of the school along such dimensions as cleanliness, emotional control, respect for authority, conformance to discipline and a serious commitment to classroom procedures and routines. For the adult disadvantaged student, the relevant behavior categories should be subject mastery and academic competence consistent with course and program objectives.

In adult basic skills classes, teachers control these students not only by the structure of dominance which underlay classroom relationships but also by transforming the students understanding of the situation and his or her capacity to act. "Good students" understand that they have or are the problem and their teacher has or is the solution. Their role as a knowing or competent actor is minimized except insofar as they know how to consume teaching and other professional services, for strength in the client role creates weaknesses in other[13] roles which the individual plays in his or her everyday round of life.

In adult disadvantaged classrooms, where affective failures are more numerous than cognitive failures, teaching is an art in human relations. One of the tenets of adult education is that adults will resist learning under conditions which are inconsistent with their image of self. In this vein, problems of self-worth and self-esteem are exacerbated for the disadvantaged through the use of instructional strategies and classroom arrangements which seek

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[13]Jeffrey Galper, "What are Radical Social Services," Social Policy, January/February, 1978, p. 39.

to confirm them in an adolescent status. Such practices proceed from the assumption that failure in the area of academic competence is presumptive evidence of failure in other areas of life. However, in contrast to the child, the disadvantaged adult comes to the classroom with a rich experiential background, a full wardrobe of social identities and reference figures as well as successes in other areas of social functioning. The challenge to the teacher is to locate the content areas within this experiential context and to fashion culturally sensitive andragogical techniques which will responsibly address their educational needs. This approach realizes three positive outcomes: it provides him with a personal point of reference, it validates the student's experience as something of value and it confirms his moral worth.

Similarly, the more penal and repressive forms of governance which characterize many public school classrooms[14] prove counter-productive in assembling a viable working relationship with disadvantaged adults. Although the structure of schools certifies power differentials between teacher and students, adult students should be allowed full entrance into the decision-making process within the classroom. This takes cognizance of the fact that both student and teacher share adult status, and on this basis can engage in a creative partnership of problem solving. This recognition makes possible a truly collaborative approach to learning.

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[14]Martin Carnoy, "Unequal Education and the Social Division of Labor," Schooling in a Corporate Society, Martin Carnoy (Ed.), (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1972), p. 50.

This does not deny the importance of structure in the instruction of the adult disadvantaged. There should be a balance between "process" and substantive outcome. The students' presence in a remedial classroom may be due to the fact that they were allowed (even by well-meaning teachers) to trivalize the primary and secondary school years. They have not developed "Effort Optimism," the belief that hard work and industry is rewarded with success. Instead, their behavior is guided by the belief that their actions are ineffectual and that change is beyond their volition.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES: IMPLICATION FOR INSTRUCTION

The learning environment should be organized around the concept of individual differences, with differences providing clues as to how the student is prepared to learn. Learning is then viewed appropriately as a constant, with time, teaching methods and materials viewed as variables. The teacher should seek, through curriculum content, physical setting and teaching strategy, to achieve a closer fit between learning potential and the demands of the various learning tasks and educational objectives. No single approach to instruction can successfully confront the richness and diversity of learning styles which is represented in the normal basic skills classroom. The teacher must be andragogically flexible in an approach which is student centered and not procedural or method centered. Within this context, testing becomes a diagnostic process, generating statements which specify the conditions under which the individual learns. When one considers the differential vulnerability of the educationally

disadvantaged to adverse classification, it is critical that this exercise be kept to a minimum. Testing is anxiety producing and the means by which many of those students have been certified as failures in their earlier school experiences. It should be no mystery why many students exhibit an almost phobic response to this event. Therefore, in the process of individualizing the learner, the teacher should be aware of the individual's sense of his own competencies, as well as the anxiety and uncertainty he brings to the learning situation and the implications of these for the accomplishment of instructional objectives.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES: IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

The disadvantaged adult evidences an uncommon sensitivity which can be partially attributed to the minority experience which is shared by a significant segment of this population. This sensitivity is an integral element in their cognitive defense against the pain of anxiety and rejection as they confront difficult economic environments and a sometimes hostile society. The culture associated with this population is derogated because they are impoverished and powerless.[15] This labeling process has certain negative cognitive consequences. Therefore, an awareness of the social and cultural heritage of the students is an indispensable attribute for teaching the adult disadvantaged. Whether out of professional duty or ideology, the teacher must display an unbiased

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[15]Murray L. Wax and Rosalie H. Wax, "Cultural Deprivation as an Educational Ideology: In The Culture of Poverty: A Critique," Eleanor Leacock (Ed.), (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1971), p. 138.

attitude and strongly convey to the students his belief in their ability to learn. Students should not be penalized for being culturally different; indeed, the classroom should be enriched by their cultural diversity.[16] However, the minority experience is not a valid reason to exempt these student from the requirement of reflecting in their daily actions the duties and responsibilities which the institution demands of all its students.

Personal and professional integrity is central to this context. In the search for relevance and relatedness, the teacher is often persuaded to adopt the lifestyle of the student in terms of vocabulary and dress. The teachers are modeling the wrong behavior. Such attempts are fraudulent and place the credibility of the teacher at serious risk. Students are alive to the incongruities between the idioms of the street, the stylized mannerisms and forms of dress which characterize the disadvantaged subculture and the formal and informal role requirements of the teacher. Some students are often offended by this pretense and react accordingly, while others will censure such behavior with ridicule. In either event, the teacher's legitimacy is eroded and his effectiveness is compromised. The important requirement for teachers of the disadvantaged is to be able to perceive the demand of other social and cultural systems, often antithetical to their own and to structure an empathic relationship with the students so that they are better able to discern the values by which the students live and fully appreciate the effectiveness of those values in the lives of those who regard them as real.

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[16] Mina P. Shaughnessy, Errors and Expectations, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 9.

DEVELOPING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The adult disadvantaged, in addition to material deprivation, are deprived of status and a sense of community. Students should never be addressed as "boys" and "girls" but as men and women. The former implies defaming stereotypes and arouse antagonism and resentment. Students should also be called by their proper names. Anglicized names or names which are easier to pronounce should not be substituted for the real names of students. In a similar vein, the teacher should adopt a single mode of address for participants within the classroom. Children are normally addressed by their first names; however, if adult students are addressed in this manner, they should be allowed to respond to the teacher in a similar fashion without facing the threat of informal sanctions. Disparities in forms of address is another kind of invidious distinction and has an erosive effect on the self-concept of the adult disadvantaged. They must have a sense of dignity. Dignity is integral to any serious interpersonal relationship. Rituals and forms are status-defining activities for those who, in their social encounters with the larger society, are consistently denied the normative expectations of civility and courtesy.

The cla sroom agenda should always emphasize the communal relationship. In order to foster a sense of community, the teacher, in addressing the class, should attempt to use terms and phrases such as "our class," "let us do this exercise together," "we should attempt this today." Language which suggests alienative distinc-

tions, such as "you people," devolves to the detriment of classroom cohesion. Students should also be made aware that they face common issues which are susceptible to both individual and collective solutions. If the effort to solve a given problem is to be a serious one, the individual solution toward which the person with the problem is encouraged should be linked with the collective solutions which will be required to change the environment in a fundamental way.

When new learners are confronted with a great amount of potentially confusing information or acts which contradict their expectations, there is a tendency to attribute blame to the most obvious cause of their discomfort - the teacher. A related problem flows from the fact that disadvantaged subcultures are characterized by an active mistrust of authority figures and a generalized refusal to give deference to authority. These attitudes are reactions to their negative experiences with institutions and bureaucracies. Within this subculture, status is not an attribute of one's social position. Status must be earned and flows from the individual's actions and personal characteristics. Consequently, the teacher has to "prove himself" and may well experience the full range of student hostility and defensiveness before his actions are perceived as credible. The teacher must be willing to take prudent risks in order to construct a trusting relationship and reach out to students even before the students are ready to respond. It is difficult, if not impossible, to teach in the context of hostile and suspicious relationships.

In an adult classroom, the management of rule-breaking behavior is always problematical. Criticism might well be the appropriate response to abusive students or practices which fracture the decorum of the classroom. Criticisms, however, should normally be conducted in private, particularly in the case of academic performance because the loss of face before the student's peers is particularly damaging to the student's self-concept, and public criticism might well elicit a similar response on the part of the student, creating an unwanted conflict situation.

The adult disadvantaged student expresses gratitude easily; however, gratitude should not be expected from the students. Teachers should be mindful of the fact that expressions of gratitude may be a coping strategy because the students feel they are captive and that being compliant, dependent and manipulative are in their best interest. The teacher should attempt to loosen existing bonds of dependency and not try to cement new ones. The students, as citizens of the community, are exercising their rights to educational services--a service for which the teachers are professionally compensated. The proper expectation should be personal respect in the same measure that the teacher is prepared to give it to the students.

IMPLICATIONS AND PROGNOSIS

1. Changing Missions of Urban Institutions

One of the outcomes of the fiscal crisis now affecting post-secondary education is a renewed concern with access and academic standards. This concern impacts heavily on community colleges.

The formative concept of the community college has been expanding access. The opening of opportunity to new populations has been surprisingly successful. However, there is a feeling in significant quarters that the access revolution has been a major contribution to the decline of standards. We are witnessing today a general examination of the role of basic skills in the college curriculum. This concern has had a chilling effect on the maintenance and expansion of basic education programs.

Many community colleges are willing to accept a decline in student enrollment in return for an improvement in achievement and the raising of entrance requirements. Under the press of reduced funding, the "open door" philosophy which is summed up in the statement, "taking individuals from where they are and taking them to where they want to go," is losing its tenability. The implications of this for equity and access and the American status/mobility system needs to be fully explored.

2. Problems Attendant upon the New Technology

A related issue is the fact that the new enthusiasm for high technology has diverted institutional dollars usually targeted for basic skills towards the higher end of the educational spectrum. A second and perhaps more important factor is the role of basic skills instruction in strengthening the work-education relationship. Relationships between institutions of work and education are cultivated and strengthened at many levels through mutual cooperation and collaboration. Instructional linkages are only one part of the overall work-education relationship.

There is a substantial population of adults in the work force who are not presently being served. These are the unskilled and semi-skilled adult worker who need to develop basic skills in order to acquire and/or retain a job. These workers are most vulnerable to technological displacement. There is increasing recognition that until literacy and basic education levels are raised, attempts at vocational upgrading and retraining will be frustrated.[17] This presents a unique opportunity for a creative partnership between adult education agencies and business and industry. There could be joint sponsorship, referrals or special countracting.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental to the educational institution--community agency relationship is cooperation, where each partner to the linkage process views it as a mutually beneficial partnership. Formal cooperation arrangements between community agencies and educational institutions have been limited in part by a so-called "credibility gap." Pedagogical, attitudinal and organizational/procedural differences have contributed to a reluctance on the part of both parties to work together.

Colleges have also been criticzed for inconsistencies between mission statements and outreach activities, lack of measurable performance outcomes, insensitivity to the level of experience of

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[17] James E. Wright, "Retraining the Adult Workforce," Lifelong Learning, 1983, p. 21.

their adult clientele and inflexibility in design and format of instruction.[18]

The first step to strengthening the linkage process involves an institutional audit, evaluating not only the basic skills curriculum and instruction but also institutional commitment, faculty/staff attitudes and organizational policies and procedures.

In light of the above, adult educators in other urban communities should consider the rubric of inter-agency cooperation as a means of addressing some of the following needs:

--A need to provide educational, recreational, social and cultural programs to people of all ages near the place where they live.

--A need to make more efficient use of school and other community facilities.

--A need in communities to create a mechanism to allow and encourage citizen participation in defining their needs and developing programs to meet those needs.

--A need to develop a collaborative approach to utilizing community resources to meet community needs. Agencies working together are much more effective than agencies working along.

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[18] Employer-Sponsored Instruction: Focus on Ohio Business and Industry, Ohio Board of Regents, Columbus, Ohio, February, 1982, p. 12.

--A need to build a stronger base of support for education in general and post-secondary education in particular.

--A need to improve education by developing a three-way partnership between the home, the school and the community.

--A need to develop credibility and trust between people who live in communities and agencies that serve those communities.

A major determinant of successful linkage is institutional commitment from the top down. Strength of commitment should be reflected in the mission goals and objectives of the institution as well as appropriate budget outlays. Finally, flexibility and adaptability might serve as guiding principles in providing greater access to community instructional programs.

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